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"Agreed, agreed!" said the lovely Eva; and her sorrow vanished like the brightening up of a summer cloud.

The first act of the magician Dhirro Dheerlha was to transform himself into an eel, and erecting the folding wreaths, twist in a spiral column to the ceiling, then turning round the castle wall, took the tail in his mouth, and then assumed his mortal shape. This feat, the first part of the tragedy, passed off without any bad results.—Next he caused the sea to appear rolling into the hall in full tide, and, taking the shape of a salmon, swam about. This transformation caused her to be more amused than frightened. But, on the third trial, when he stood before her with a hatchet in his hand, and, laying his head on a block, cut it off at a stroke—she shrieked aloud and fainted.

The spell was in an instant wrought, the work of enchantment accomplished, the penalties incurred, and Dhirro Dheerlha vanished in a flash of light, and he must continue to remain a shadow, a thing of air, till the judgment day, or until the cloth of gold shall have been worn from his horse's shoes by the septennial ride. But for the scream of the Countess, Earl Garrett would have finally fixed the head again in its proper place, and have ended his mortal pilgrimage as a mortal; but even then Satan would have claimed the reversion of his soul.

Some centuries after Dhirro Dheerlha became enchanted, one dark and tempestuous night a party of sailors sought safety and shelter in an old castle situated on the sea-coast; it looked like a friendly asylum from the dangers of the deep. One of the sailors raised a horn which hung outside the mansion gateway, and blew a loud blast; the gate creaked on the rusted hinges, then flew open wide, but no porter was visible; some unseen hand had performed the office. They proceeded into a large room, where a number of warriors clad in antique armour were seated round a table in the centre of the apartment, each of whom leaned his head on it, as if asleep. A sword, which was of a size that no puny arm of the present day could wield, lay in a rusted scabbard on the table. They were Dhirro Dheerlha and his men in their castle of enchantment. One of the sailors took up the sword, and as he gradually unsheathed it, the sleeping warriors slowly raised their heads. Struck with terror, he let fall the weapon, when the enchanted heroes resumed their grotesque postures again and for ever. The sailors, though accustomed to brave danger in its most appalling forms, made a hurried retreat towards the ship, resolving never again to visit the watery retreat of the enchanted sorcerer Dhirro Dheerlha, or disturb his peaceful slumbers.

As they passed the postern, these startling words rang in their ears:—

If you drew the sword as you sounded the horn,
You'd be the happiest man that ever was born.

Carlou.

J. H. K.

THE THREE DEVILS.

"Seymour, have you heard the story Paddy Sullivan tells of himself?"

"No. Is that the man that lives in the neat white-washed cottage, on the bank of the river?"

"The same," replied Richard Butler to his cousin, Mr. Seymour, as they sat over their wine, on a beautiful summer evening. The whole of the surrounding country belonged to him; and there were few of the peasantry you met for a mile round who would not, when asked who he was, reply, 'the Masther,' thinking that explanation enough.

"The same—but you must hear him yourself. May I trouble you to pull the bell—thank you—it is nothing without his own description. John, (to a servant,) send up to Paddy Sullivan, and tell him I will thank him to come down.

Paddy was soon seen "spreading" down; he seemed a fine stout man about forty, who when he entered the room, exhibited a laughable exterior. His Sunday coat was taken from "the box," and donned over his everyday waistcoat, and his old working breeches formed but a poor contrast to his bright light-blue stockings, part of the Sunday attire also. And, to crown all, the "ould caubeen" surmounted his tall person, like the "cap of liberty" on a May-pole.

"A fine evening, Paddy," said Richard.

"Wisha, an' that's the truth for your honour, God bless it!" was the reply.

"Paddy, I sent for you to beg you would tell the story of 'The Three Devils' to Mr. Seymour, my cousin."

"Ya then, 'tis I would do so for your honour's dog, let alone for this fine young gentleman, and 'tis sorry I am 'tis not better, Masther Richard. But the story, Sir—it was just next Michaelmas five years, afther our having most of the harvest gother in, in the little haggart, when I came home from the work, an' sure enough I was tired; it was about five o'clock, an' 'twas for all the world such an evening as this. Well, as I was saying, afther I came back, I went outside the door and sat down; an' sure I hadn't been there long, when up comes three little dacent-looking men, all in black, an', to tell the truth, I didn't like their looks at all. Well, one of the fellows says to me, 'Arrah, Paddy Sullivan, isn't that your name?'"

"That's thrue for you," says I, 'twas that I was christened surely: but how do you know my name?' says I—(for if I was to be shot, I couldn't say 'Sir' to the fellows.)

"Don't be afther axing what you know nothing about," says the little fellow.

"And sure that's my reason for axing," says I, 'bekase I don't know it.'

"Why thin, Paddy," says he, 'do you think I'll make you as wise as myself?' An' thin they all set up a laugh, an' such a laugh! An' thin says another fellow to me, says he, 'Paddy, do you know the way to the road?'

"Faix, if I don't, I ought," says I; an' wid that the first fellow who was 'the Masther' over them, as you are over us, Sir, (not that I'd compare ye) says mighty sharp and slow,—

"Paddy Sullivan," says he, 'you had better answer the gentleman,' says he, 'd'ye hear?'

"Well I do, if that will plase ye," says I—(an' though smart I spoke, I was shivering all over.)

"An' if you do," says 'the Masther,' 'will you show it to us, as we want to know the way?'

"There's a word wanting," says I.

"Oh, iss!" says he, an' wid that he cocks up his nose, (an' a fine one he had of his own, that is a big one I mane, for it was for a certainty the ugliest I ever saw) 'oh, iss,' says he, 'if you plase—will that do ye?'

"Ay," says I, 'that's what I likes, being polite.'

"But he cut me short, an' says he, 'don't be botherin' us wid your blatherin' nonsense.'

"So wid that I got afraid, an' up I got, an' says I, 'come along, an' I'll show you the road.'

"Off we went to the road. Well, as we went along (I afore 'em) they were laughing as hard as they could pelt. I bore a long time all this, but at last I turns round; an' says I, 'wisha, sure you might as well let me into the joke; I likes a bit of fun as well as any one,' says I, (an' faix that was true for me, your honour.)

"Then the little man cocks himself up, an' says he, 'Paddy Sullivan, hould your tongue, I bid ye, ye'll know the joke, (as you call it) perhaps sooner than ye wish.'

"Afther that I never says a word till I got to the road, an' whin I got there, I says, 'there's the road for ye, an' God bless ye.'

"If ever you mention that name afore me again, Paddy Sullivan," says the little fellow—"I'll be the death of you, that is while we're together."

"Faix, an' that wont be long," says I.

"Longer than you think maybe," says he.

"Wisha then, if that's the way you talk," says I, 'good-by to ye.'

"Not so fast," says he—"look at us."

"Oh, musha! an' I did look, an' sure I wasn't in a hurry to look again, for, instead of three Christians born, there were three black things, with long ears an' tails! As soon as I had looked at 'em, the ould fellow says, 'you must come,' says he, 'wid us now.'

"The devil take me if I do," says I.

"An' so we will take you, never fear," says he; 'shove along.'

"There's two words to that, says I.

"Maybe not," says he.

"So wid that they tuck up three little *kippins** off the road, an' no sooner did they touch them, than they became (afore my eyes) *raal* shilelahs!"

"Come now, boys," says 'the Masther' to the others, 'use these,' says he—(an' sure enough they were the lads that knew how.)

"So one fellow ups wid his bit of oak, 'come Paddy,' says he, 'I'm tould it's mighty hard to hurt you—try this, I want to know if it's the case,' says he.

"So he hits me a crack, an' 'pon my conscience, *that* was the *raal* delight, though, faix, I didn't think so at that time, to tell the truth. Afther that I don't know how it was, but myself felt the legs runnin' away wid me; so off I pelted towards the town, and the fellows afther me like mad, an' slap into the town we went, an' that as hard as ever we could leg it—up one street, down another. Every turn I'd make, slap afore me at it would one of the fellows be; an' sure, thin, if my shouldthers didn't pay the piper, no matter. Well, at last, as I went, like a dog afther a hare, round a corner, to be sure the black lad was there afore, but I ducked* as I passed, an' the fellow for once missed his aim. Well, faix, I laughed, an' says I to myself, (for I was afeard to say it out,) I'm a clever fellow, for I bate the devil!—(for I didn't tell your honour they were three devils all the time!) Arrah, the word wasn't thought of, when slap comes the lad ridin' on my shouldthers, an' he cocks his legs out afore my mouth! Widout sayin' a word, I up wid my hands, an' I caught him by the calves of the legs, an' pinched him as hard as ever I could, an' wid that he began to roar like a bull, so that you might hear him a mile off; and then he fell off my back like a sack of whate! (I often heard that blacks were mighty touchy about the legs.) Well, 'twas myself was glad in my heart widin, an' sure, if I run fast afore, I run ten times as fast now—an' sure enough I didn't go far at all, when at a turn there was another black afore me there—so, faix, myself tried another duck, an' he missed his aim like the other—'oh, ho, my lad,' says I, 'you shan't get a ride at all events'—but at that moment smack came my lad on my back—ah! if the other fellow's shins got it before, this chap got it ten times as hard, and if the other roared, he never could equal this lad.

"Well," says I to myself, 'better have one than three,' says I; 'an' I suppose I'll be soon rid of him, too,' says I.

"Arrah, the words weren't said (to myself) when the last fellow (who was 'the Masther') says, 'Paddy Sullivan, 'tis you that knows a great dale about the matther; faix, thin, I won't jump on your back,' says he, 'but I'll follow till you can run no more, an' thin I'll have you asy, an' 'tis I will punish you for my brothers—for I'm the devil!'

"A blue look-out," says I, 'but I'm not tired yet, any how; so we pegged away like mad dogs, up one street, down another—through main street and little street—until, afther runnin' a long time, I found myself afore the market—(an' a fine one it is, Masther Richard)—so slap I goes down it, an' slap comes the devil afther me. I went dodging through the people; an' afther a while I gives a look back, an' if I went towards the door I should meet him, an, faix, 'twas Paddy Sullivan had no fancy for that same. Well, jist thin, what should I see but a big baker's basket afore me, mighty invitin'. Widout delay, in I jumps, but I suppose the ould fellow seen me as I went in, for afore I could say Jack Robinson, he comes an' hoises the basket, an' myself, an' all, on his back, an' away he pegs. Well, to be sure, I gave myself up for lost, an' sure well I might—the fellow legged up one street, down another; but many's the time my mother towld me that 'I bang'd Banagher,' an' sure that fellow (they say) bang'd my black friend—so 'twould be quare if I wasn't a match for him. Just as the fellow was runnin' like a house afire by a little shop, I made a grab at the sign-post—I caught it, an' there I hung; an', would you bleeve it, Sir, sorra bit of the devil missed me. Well, to be sure, 'twas myself that was glad to get rid of him, but I soon got tired of my place, for my arms were not able to hould up my big body.

"I hadn't been there long, when out comes the man of the shop, a low, fat, little man, and up he looks—

"Wisha, then, bad luck to your four bones," says he, 'you omadhawn of the devil, what are ye doin' there?'

"Oh, thin," says myself, 'if you'll help me down, 'tis I that wont trouble this post any longer, an' 'tis I that's thankful to it, if you knew but all.'

"Ay," says he, 'so you ought, for 'tis from a post like that you'll be endin' your days yet.'

"But not till you go afore me to thry if the beam is strong enough, an' 'tis your body that would give it a good thrial," says I.

"Wid that the little man's face got very red, an' in he walked, or waddled into the house, an' presently out he comes wid a wattle in his fist, an' out afther him comes a little boy, wid a chair—up he gets on a chair, an' begins bangin' me, for he well knew I could not touch him, in regard of being obliged to support myself wid both my hands. But, at last, whin he went too far, an' continued pelting away, what do you think, your honour, Mr. Seymour, I did?"

"Why, I suppose, you let yourself drop down," answered Mr. Seymour.

"Oh, the sorra bit, your honour; but I—awoke!"

"Awoke!" cried Seymour; "surely you were not asleep."

"Wisha, an' that's thrue I was; an' instead of the little man bein' batin' me, 'twas only the wife that was thumpin' my head, to awake me to go to my supper—so you see, Sir, I only dreamt all about *The Three Devils*."

LEAP YEAR.*

It may not be amiss to inquire into the reason why the present year, 1856, is more beneficial to us by a whole day than either of the three preceding or the three succeeding years. The day, which means the time that the earth takes to turn round once on its axis, so as to present any one point of its surface successively in every direction to the circumference of a circle in absolute space, is what we may call a *constant quantity*—that is, we have no reason to believe that it is shorter at any one period of time than at another. It depends upon the earth alone, and does not appear to be influenced by the sun, the moon, or any other of the celestial bodies. The axis, or imaginary line around which the earth turns, is perfectly constant to its position in the earth amid all the varied motions of that body, and all the varying influences which the sun, the moon, and the planets have upon it. The earth, as a mere piece of matter, has no more power of increasing or diminishing its quantity, or of varying its motions, than it has, or could have had, of creating itself; and, therefore, this rotation upon its axis, which measures the length of the day, may be considered as being absolutely the same at every period of the world's history, just as the latitudes of places have remained the same from the earliest time of observation. Indeed we can see no cause why there should, or even could, be any variation in this particular motion of the earth. The influences of the other celestial bodies, in as far as they tell upon the earth at all, tell upon the whole of it as one entire mass, of which the whole of the parts are alike affected, in the ratios of the squares of their distances from the disturbing sun, moon, or planet; and, therefore, the distant bodies in the heavens no more disturb the rotation of the earth on its axis, than they disturb the going of a watch, the progress of a coach or ship, or the evolutions of a person in a dance.

We are, therefore, to consider this natural day, or twenty-four hours, as the original and invariable standard of time. It is the only standard which we know to be quite invariable, and even it is not of uniform length at all seasons of the year, as told by the sun or any of the other celestial bodies. There are four times in the year when the hour by the sun and by a perfectly true clock momentarily correspond; and these are the two equinoxes in spring and autumn, and the two solstices in summer and

* "Kippins"—little sticks.

† "Ducked"—stooped.

* From a very excellent little work, entitled "The Magazine of Domestic Economy," which, besides numerous literary notices, and papers on domestic economy, contains many valuable hints for the housekeeper, gardener, &c.